# 2003/2004 SATISFACTION WITH EDUCATION IN ALBERTA SURVEY
# SUMMARY REPORT

*Prepared by*
**PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT AND REPORTING**
**ALBERTA LEARNING**

**December 2004**

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Satisfaction with Education in Alberta Survey is a set of surveys conducted annually to provide feedback from learning system stakeholders regarding their perceptions of Alberta's learning system. In previous years, respondents have included high school students, parents of children in the K-12 learning system, parents of students with severe special needs, the public and adult learners. In 2003/04, teachers were also asked to participate in the survey. Compustat Consultants was retained by Alberta Learning to conduct this set of surveys for 2003/04.

This year's set of surveys was conducted from mid-February to early March 2004.

The main objectives of this study are to determine:

- Satisfaction with the overall quality, responsiveness and accessibility of Alberta's learning system (as outlined in Alberta Learning's Business Plan).
- Satisfaction with the preparation of learners for lifelong learning, employment and citizenship (as outlined in Alberta Learning's Business Plan).

### Key Findings

***The vast majority of high school students and parents of students (both ECS-Grade 12 and severe special needs) were satisfied with the quality of education.***

98% of high school students were satisfied with the quality of basic education, followed by 89% of teachers, 88% of parents of ECS-Grade 12 students, 82% of parents of students with severe special needs and 71% of the public.

***Overall, adults were satisfied with the quality of learning programs in Alberta's adult learning system.***

Public and adult learner satisfaction with the quality of learning programs in the adult learning system was 77%.

***A large majority of adult learners were satisfied with the education or training they received.***

Adult learner satisfaction was very high, with 91% of adult learners surveyed expressing satisfaction with the education or training they have received.

***Most high school students and parents of students (both ECS-Grade 12 and severe special needs) were satisfied that the education system meets their needs and expectations.***

92% of high school students were satisfied that the education system meets their needs and expectations, followed by 77% of parents of students with severe

special needs and 70% of parents of ECS-Grade 12 students. 60% of teachers were satisfied that the education system meets their needs and expectations. 57% of the public surveyed indicated that the education system meets their needs and expectations.

***The majority of parents and the public agreed that students are learning what they need to know.***

82% of parents and 89% of teachers agreed that students are learning what they need to know. Public agreement was lower at 60%.

***The vast majority of high school students plan to pursue post-secondary education.***

94% of high school students agreed they planned to pursue a university or college education.

***Most adult learners and the public (non-learners) were satisfied that adults taking education or training are getting the skills they need for the workforce.***

Adult learner satisfaction was 80%, while public (non-learner) satisfaction was 75%.

***Public satisfaction that high school graduates are well-prepared for citizenship was stable at 61%.***

61% of the public were satisfied or very satisfied that high school graduates in Alberta are well prepared for citizenship.

***Parent satisfaction with access to information about their child's educational progress/achievement remains high.***

88% of parents were satisfied with their access to information about their child's educational progress and achievements.

***Over two-thirds of parents and slightly more than half the public were satisfied that they are receiving value for the money spent in their community's schools.***

72% of parents of ECS-Grade 12 students were satisfied that they are receiving value for money spent in their child's school, and 76% of parents of students with severe special needs were also very satisfied or satisfied that they are receiving value for money. 54% of the public was satisfied that they are receiving value for money that is spent in schools in their community.

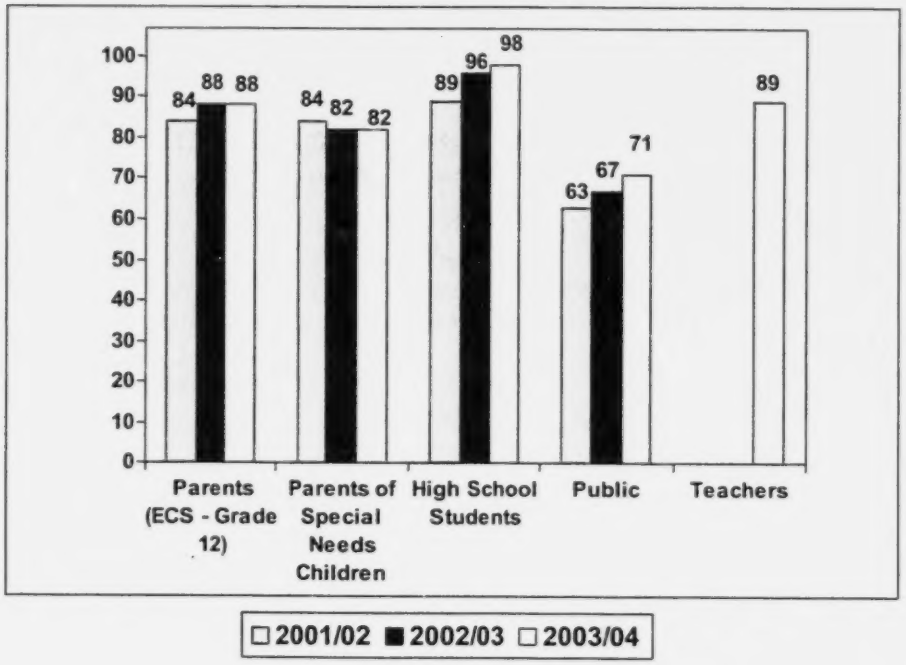
## I. OVERALL QUALITY AND RESPONSIVENESS OF EDUCATION SYSTEM

### Quality of Education

***The majority of high school students and parents of students (both ECS-Grade 12 and severe special needs) were satisfied with the quality of education.***

Parents of students (both ECS-Grade 12 and severe special needs), high school students, teachers and the public were asked to rate their satisfaction with the elementary, junior and senior high education system. High school students (98%) were the most satisfied with the quality of basic education followed by parents of both ECS-Grade 12 (88%) and severe special needs students (82%) and the public (71%). Teacher results are presented here and in other graphs in this report, as a point of comparison with results from the respondent groups.

**Satisfaction with Quality of Education**



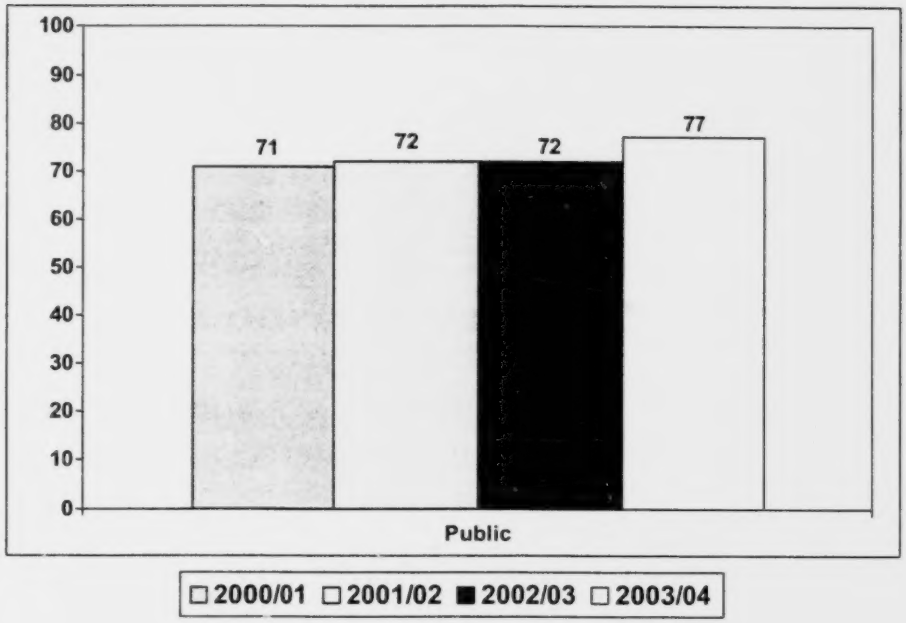

Note that each respondent group was asked this question from their perspective:

- for parents, it was the quality of education their child was receiving
- for students and teachers, it was the quality of education in their school
- for the public, it was the quality of education students received at schools in their community.

***Overall, adults are satisfied with the quality of learning programs in Alberta's adult learning system.***

Public satisfaction with the quality of learning programs in the adult learning system was high at 77%. Results increased slightly in 2003/04.

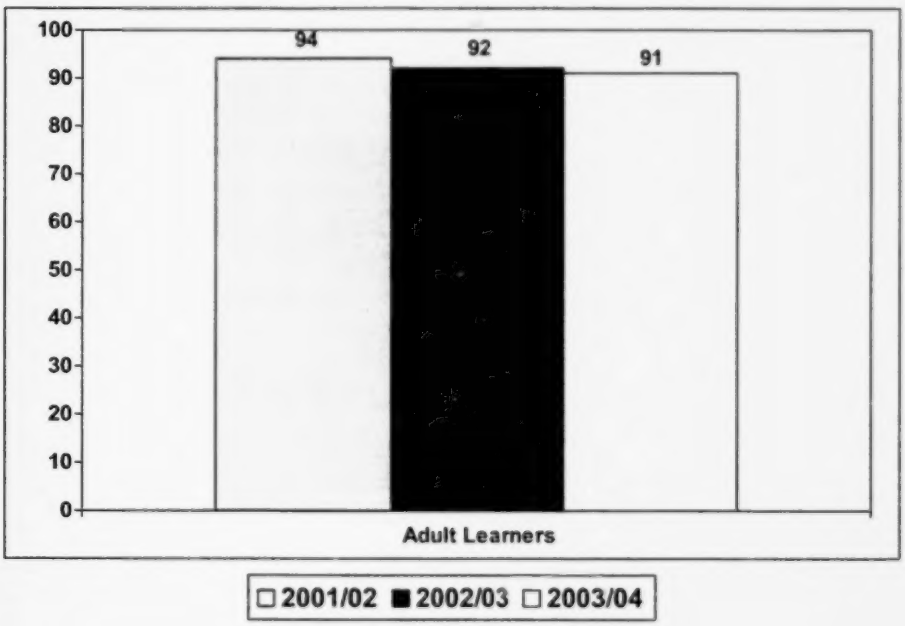
**Satisfaction with Overall Quality of Learning Programs in the Adult Education System**



***The majority of adult learners were satisfied with the education or training they received.***

91% of the adult learners surveyed expressed satisfaction (37% "very satisfied" and 54% "satisfied") with the education or training they have received. Satisfaction has been consistent over time.

**Yearly Comparison of Satisfaction with Education or Training Received (2002-2004)**

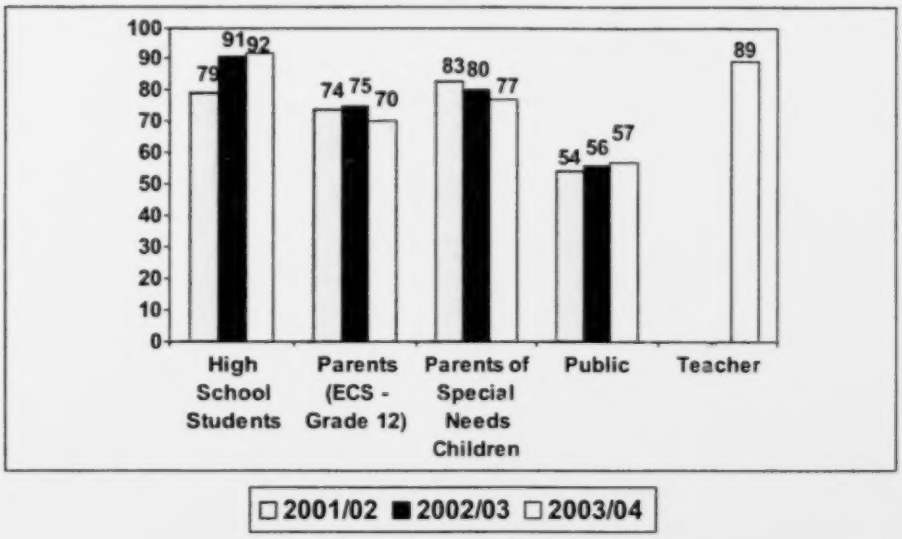


## Responsiveness

***Most high school students and parents of students (both ECS-Grade 12 and severe special needs) were satisfied with the responsiveness of the education system to their needs and expectations.***

Stakeholders in Alberta's education system generally agreed the system meets their needs and expectations. High school students (92%) were the most satisfied with the responsiveness of the education system, followed by parents of students with severe special needs (77%) and parents of ECS-Grade 12 students (70%). Slightly more than half (57%) of the public surveyed indicated the responsiveness of the education system was satisfactory.

**Education System Meets Needs and Expectations**




Satisfaction with the responsiveness of the education system was maintained or increased for students and the public. Satisfaction for teachers was high at 89%.

Note that for the years 2001-2003, the question was phrased, "How satisfied are you with the responsiveness of the education system to your needs and expectations?" In 2003/2004 the question was phrased, "Overall, how satisfied are you that the education system meets your needs and expectations?" The difference in wording may have affected results for 2003/04.

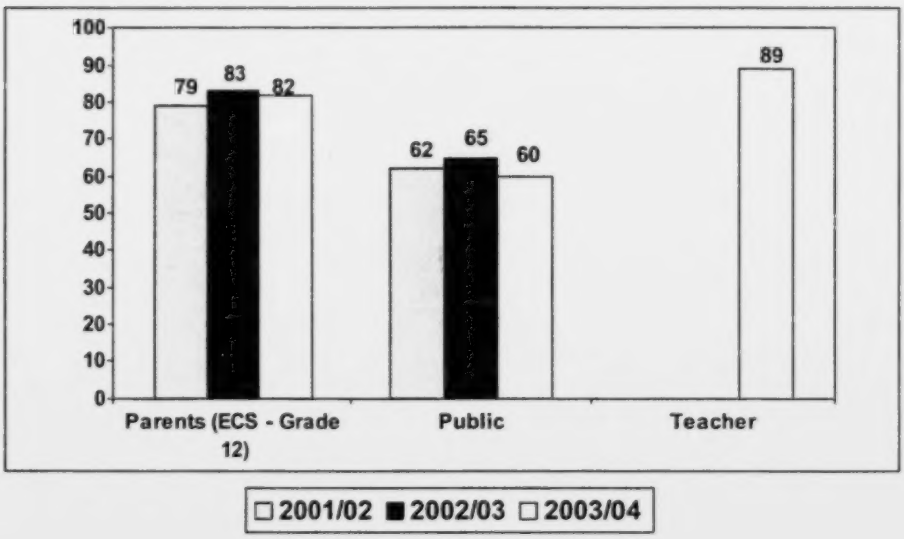
## II. PREPARATION OF LEARNERS

### Overall Student Learning

***The majority of parents, teachers and the public agreed that students are learning what they need to know. High school students also agreed that they are improving in these key subject areas.***

Parents were asked to consider what is being taught in their child's school and to rate their level of agreement that students are learning what they need to know. Most parents (82%) and teachers (89%) agreed that students are learning what they need to know at their school. 60% of the public agreed that students are taught what they need to know.

**Satisfaction that Students are Learning What They Need to Know**




Parents of students (both ECS-Grade 12 and severe special needs), teachers and the public were asked to rate their level of agreement that students are learning what they need to know in a number of core skill areas. Compared to the public, parents of ECS-Grade 12 students were more inclined to agree that students are learning what they need to know overall and in core curriculum areas.

High school students were also asked if they agreed that they were getting better at these core skill areas. The majority of respondents (85-92%) agreed that they were improving in each of these areas. 89% of high school students also agreed that the core subjects they are learning at school are useful to them.

Parents of ECS-Grade 12 students were most satisfied that students are learning what they need to know in reading (87%) and science (85%). The area of lowest satisfaction was social studies (81%).

The public's highest level of satisfaction was in the areas of science and reading, where 79% felt what is being taught is appropriate. The subject area of writing (69%) received the lowest satisfaction rating.

**Table 1: Satisfaction that Students are Learning What They Need to Know in the Core Skill Areas**

| Subject | Parents of ECS to Grade 12 Students | | Public | | Parents of severe special needs Children | | Teachers | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 2002/03 | 2003/04 | 2002/03 | 2003/04 | 2002/03 | 2003/04 | 2002/03 | 2003/04 |
| Reading | 83% | 87% | 67% | 79% | 68% | 76% | - | 89% |
| Science | 85% | 85% | 79% | 79% | N/A | N/A | - | 87% |
| Mathematics | 83% | 83% | 70% | 73% | 62% | 67% | - | 79% |
| Writing | 80% | 82% | 60% | 69% | 65% | 69% | - | 86% |
| Social Studies | 80% | 81% | 69% | 71% | N/A | N/A | - | 75% |

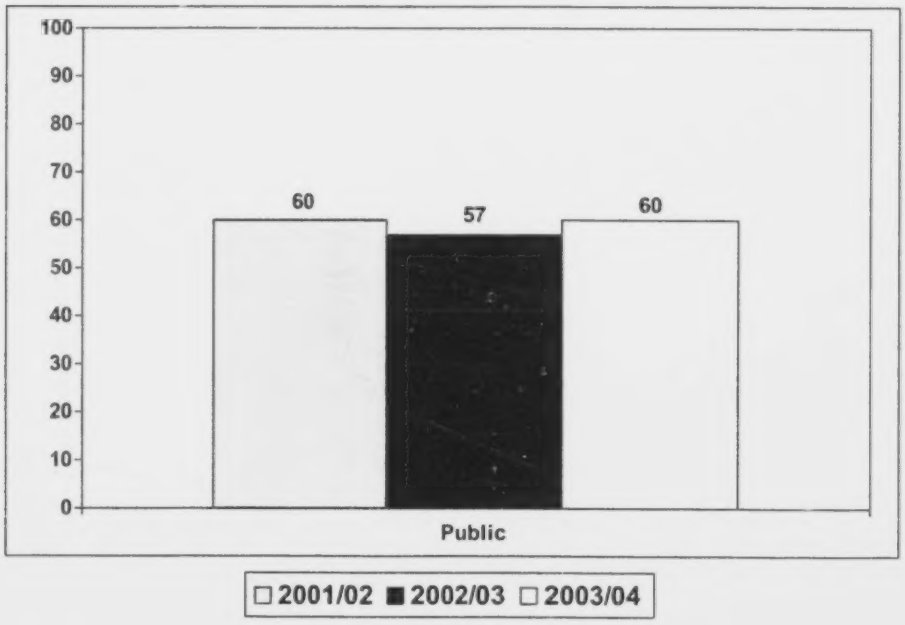
Results for all subject areas across all respondent groups with historical data have increased or remained stable since 2002/03.

## Preparation for Lifelong Learning

***60% of public respondents agreed that high school graduates in Alberta are prepared to enter post-secondary education and training.***

Over half (60%) of the public agreed that high school graduates in Alberta were prepared to enter post-secondary education and training. Results have been consistent over the last three years.

**Public Agreement that High School Graduates are Prepared to Enter Post-Secondary Education and Training**

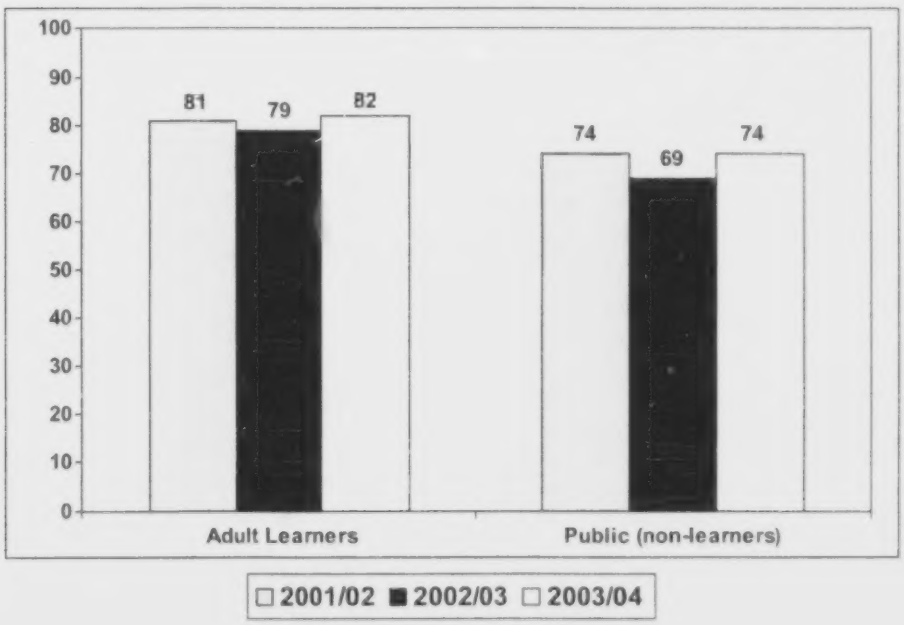


***Most adult learners and the public (non-learners) were satisfied that adults taking education or training are well prepared for learning throughout their lifetime.***

82% of adult learners reported that adults taking education or training are being taught the appropriate combination of skills and knowledge to prepare them for lifelong learning.

74% of the public (non-learners) were satisfied that adult learners are given the appropriate skills and knowledge to prepare them for learning throughout their lifetime.

**Satisfaction that Adults Taking Education/Training Are Taught the Appropriate Combination of Skills/Knowledge to Prepare for Learning Throughout Their Lifetime**



***The vast majority of high school students intend to pursue a university or college education.***

94% of high school students agreed they planned to pursue a university or college education, while 46% agreed they planned to pursue a trade as their career choice.

**Table 2: High School Student Plans**

| Question | 2001/02 | 2002/03 | 2003/04 |
|---|---|---|---|
| I plan to pursue a university or college education | 93% | 94% | 94% |
| I plan to pursue a trade as my career choice | 40% | 47% | 46% |

Agreement for plans to pursue a university or college education is consistent with the results from 2001/02 and 2002/03. Agreement regarding plans to pursue a trade has increased since 2001/02.

Note that the two statements are not mutually exclusive, thus a student could respond positively to both statements.

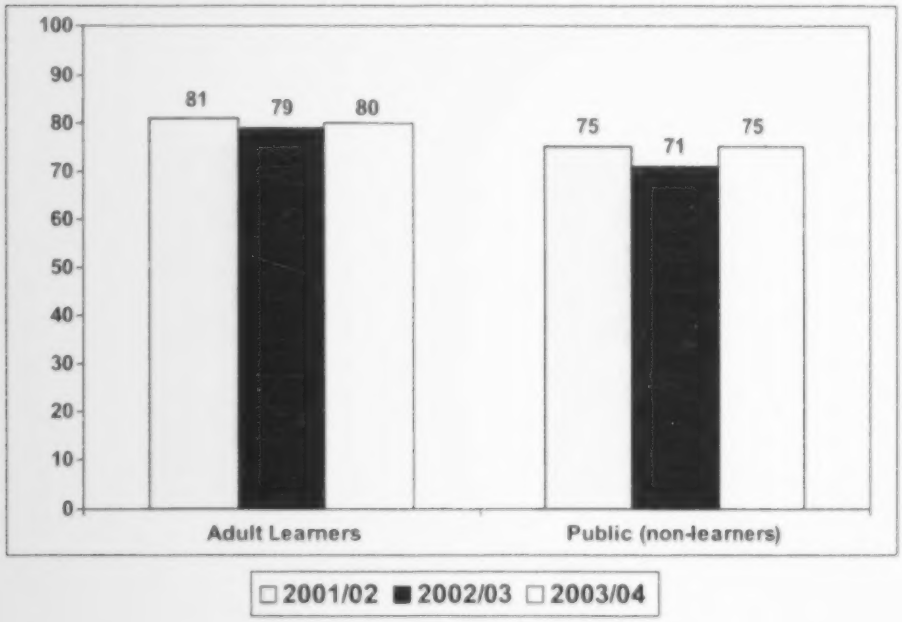
## Preparation for the Workforce

***Most adult learners and the public (non-learners) were satisfied that adults taking education or training are getting the skills they need for the workforce.***

80% of adult learners surveyed were satisfied that adults taking education or training are getting the skills they need to prepare them for the workforce.

75% of the public (non-learners) were satisfied that adult learners are being prepared for the workforce, which is a return to the results found in 2001/02.

**Satisfaction that Adults Taking Education or Training are Getting the Skills/Knowledge to Prepare Them for the Workforce**

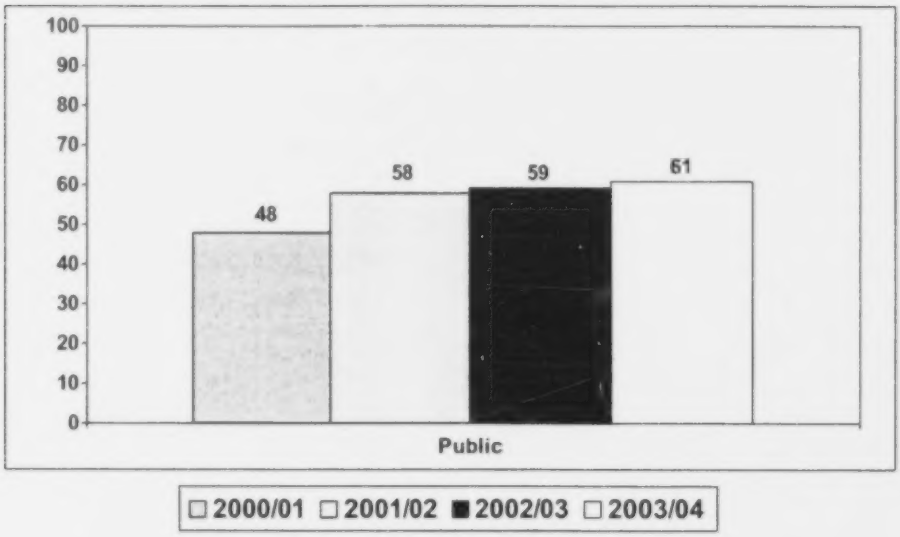


## Preparation for Citizenship

***61% of the public agreed that high school graduates are being well prepared for citizenship.***

Satisfaction with high school graduates' preparation for citizenship has increased over the last four years.

**Satisfaction that High School Graduates are Well Prepared for Citizenship**

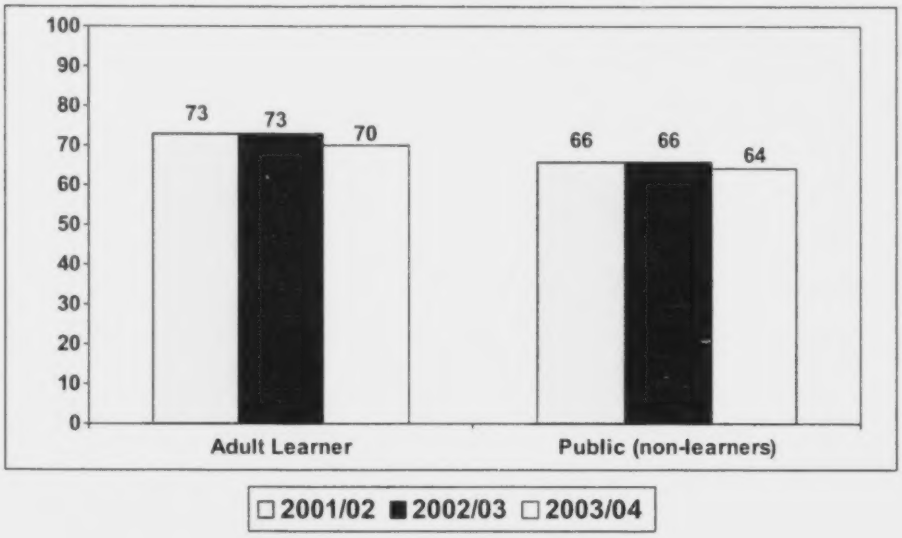


***The majority of adult learners and two-thirds of the public were satisfied that adult learners are being prepared for citizenship.***

70% of adult learners were satisfied that the education and training available prepares them for citizenship.

64% of the public expressed satisfaction that adult learners are being well prepared for citizenship.

**Satisfaction that Adult Learners are Well Prepared for Citizenship**




The satisfaction for both respondent groups in 2003/04 is consistent with results for the previous two years.

## III. ACCESSIBILITY OF EDUCATION AND INFORMATION

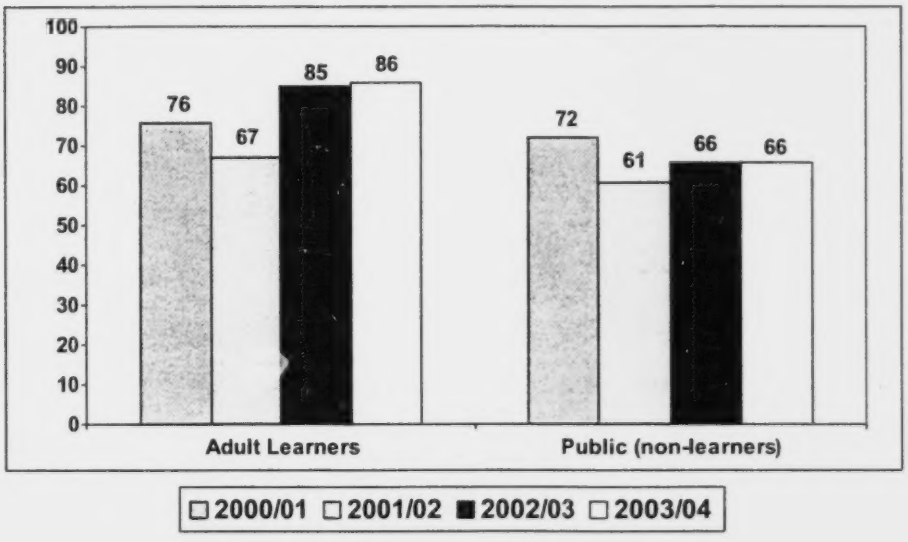
### Access to Education

***The majority of adult learners and two-thirds of the public (non-learners) were satisfied that adult learners have access to the education or training they want.***

The majority (86%) of adult learners felt that Albertans are able to access the education or training they want.

Overall, 66% of the public (non-learners) felt that adult learners have access to the education or training they want.

**Satisfaction with Accessibility of Desired Education/Training**



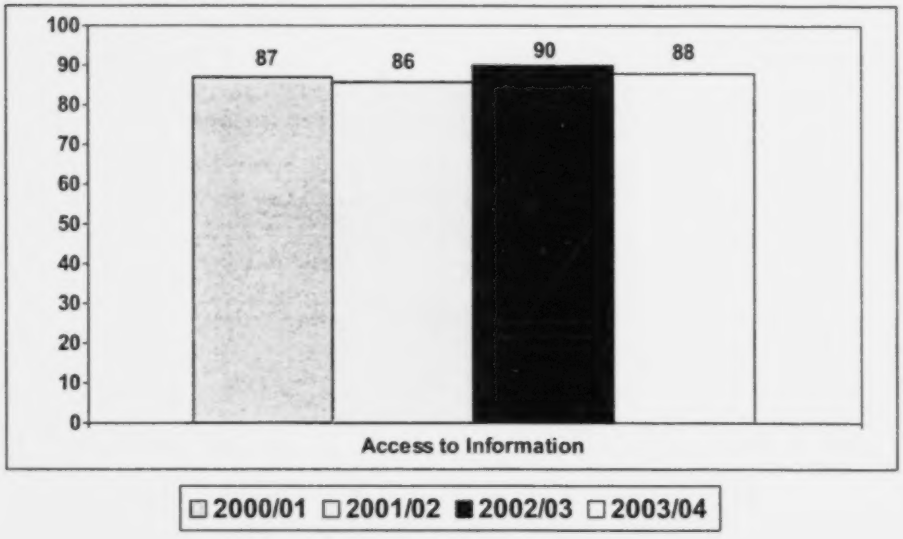

Note that the wording of the question asked of adult learners was clarified in the 2002/03 survey. In previous years, adult learners were asked about their satisfaction that "most adults are able to access the education or training **they** want." In 2002/03 and 2003/04, they were asked about their satisfaction that "you are able to access the education or training **you** want".

## Access to Information

***Parent satisfaction with access to information about their child's educational progress/achievement remains high.***

The vast majority of parents (88%) were satisfied with their access to information about their child's educational progress and achievements.

**Parent Satisfaction with Access to Information About Their Child's Educational Progress/Achievement**

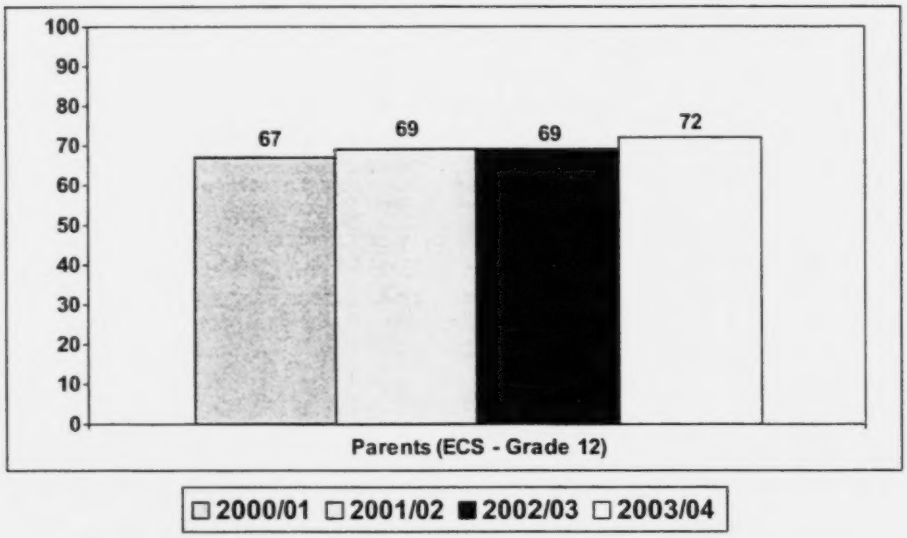



Parent satisfaction with access to information has remained relatively constant over the last four years.

***More than two-thirds of parents agreed that they received the necessary information to access programs and services that meet their child's learning needs.***

72% of parents surveyed agreed they receive the necessary information to access programs and services that meet the learning needs of their child (9% "strongly agreed" and 63% "agreed").

**Agreement that Parents Get the Necessary Information to Access Programs and Services that Meet Their Child's Learning Needs**




The agreement levels for parents (ECS-Grade 12) have risen slightly since 2000/01.

***Approximately half of parents and the public are satisfied with their access to information and the information received concerning educational spending.***

Satisfaction with access to information about educational spending generally declined as the reference point moved further from their community. Approximately half of the respondents are satisfied with:

- access to (62% parents & 41% public) about how money is spent by their child's school
- access to (50% parents & 41% public) about how money is spent by their local school board.

**Table 3: Satisfaction with Access to Information**

| Satisfaction with access to information about how money is spent: | Parents of ECS to Grade 12 Students** | | Public* | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 2002/03 | 2003/04 | 2002/03 | 2003/04 |
| In schools in your community*/in your child's school** | 58% | 62% | 42% | 41% |
| By your local school board | 47% | 50% | 41% | 41% |
| By the provincial government on elementary, junior and senior high schools | 32% | 40% | 32% | 32% |

*This text was used in the Public/Adult Learner/Adult Non-Learner Survey.
**This text was used in the Parent Survey.

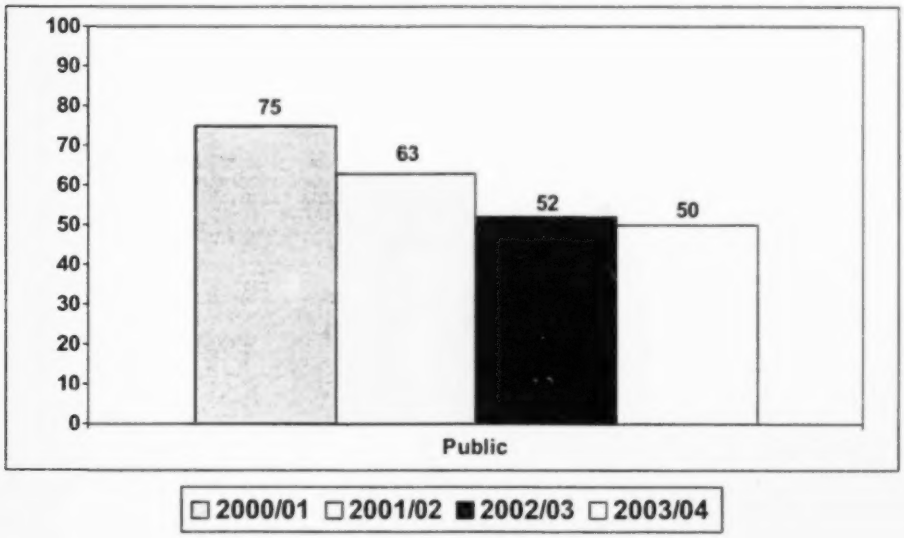
In the majority of cases, satisfaction has remained the same or increased from 2002/03 levels.

## IV. AFFORDABILITY OF EDUCATION

***Half of the public agreed that the learning system was within the means of most Albertans.***

Overall, 50% of the public agreed that the learning system was within the means of most Albertans (4% "strongly agreed" and 45% "agreed").

**Extent to Which Alberta's Learning System is Within the Means of Most Albertans**



## V. INVOLVEMENT IN DECISION MAKING

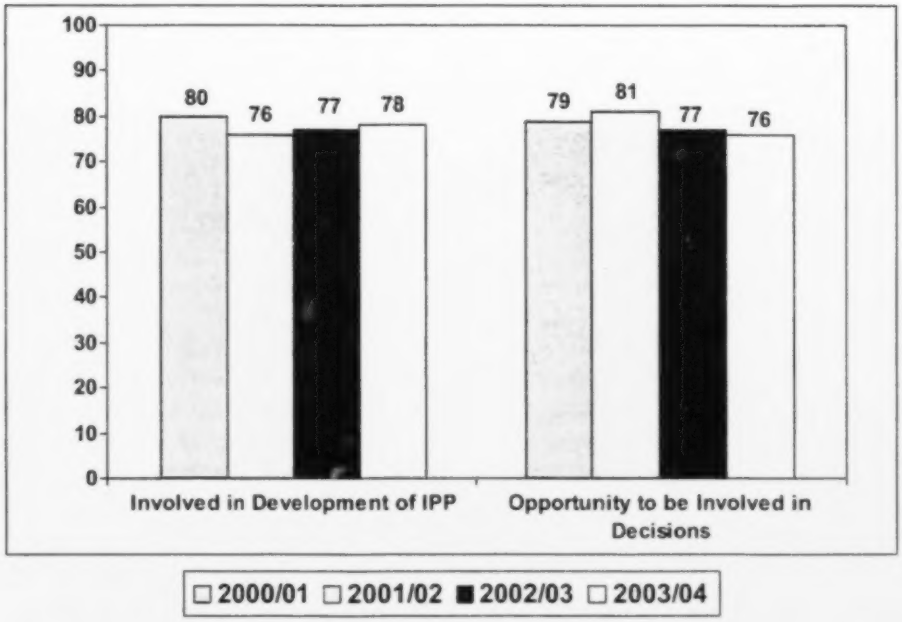
***The majority of parents of severe special needs children agreed that they were involved in the development of their child's Individual Program Plan (IPP), and that they had opportunity for involvement in decisions regarding services offered to their child.***

With respect to their child's Individualized Program Plan (IPP) most parents agreed (78%) that they had been meaningfully involved in the development of the plan. Note that 5% of respondents indicated that their child did not have an IPP or they were uncertain if their child had an IPP.

Most parents also agreed that they had opportunity for involvement in decisions regarding services offered to their child (76%).

Results have remained consistent over time for both involvement in the development of the IPP and the opportunity to be involved in decisions regarding services for the student.

**Parent Involvement in the Development of the IPP and Satisfaction with the Opportunity for Involvement in Decisions Regarding Services**



## VI. PERCEPTION OF VALUE FOR MONEY

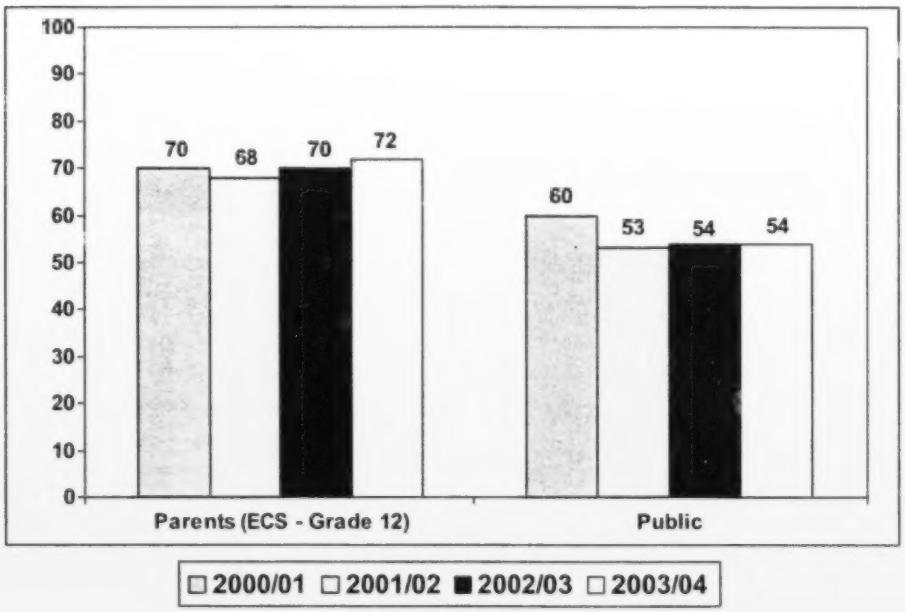
***Over two-thirds of parents and slightly more than half the public are satisfied that they are receiving value for the money spent in their community's schools.***

Most parents (72%) are satisfied that they are receiving value for the money that is spent in their child's school.

54% of the public is satisfied with the value that they are receiving for the amount of money that is spent in community schools.

In addition, in 2003/04 parents of students with severe special needs were asked this question for the first time. 76% of these parents were satisfied that they are receiving value for money that is spent in their child's school.

**Satisfaction with Value for Money Spent on Community Schools**



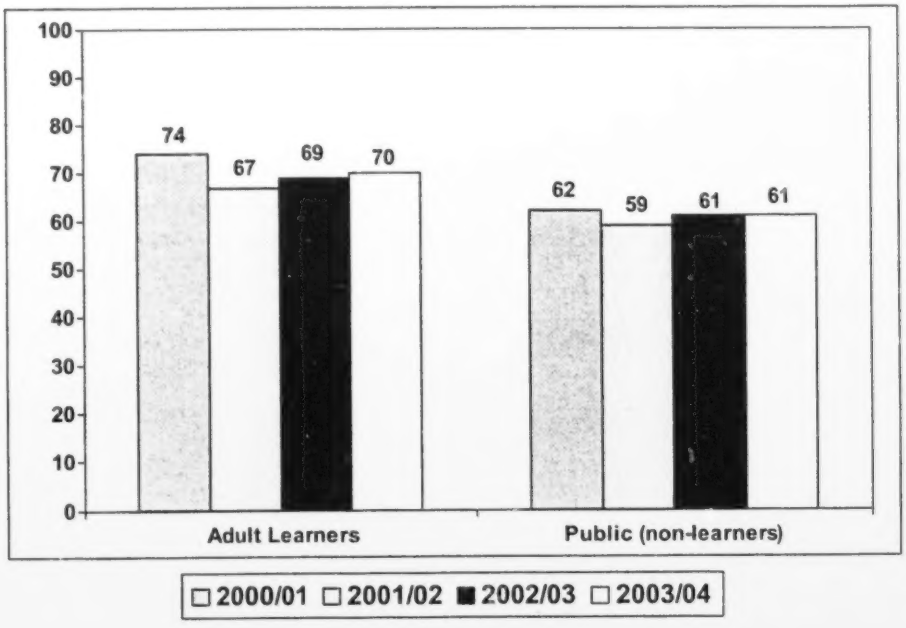

Parent and public satisfaction in 2003/04 are consistent with 2002/03 results.

***Over two-thirds of adult learners and over half the public (non-learners) feel they are receiving value for money spent on adult learning institutions.***

70% of adult learners surveyed reported satisfaction with the value for money spent on adult learning institutions. This is up from 67% that reported being satisfied in the 2001/02 survey.

61% of the public was satisfied they are receiving value for money that is spent on adult learning institutions. Results are consistent with those from 2002/03.

**Satisfaction with Value for Money Spent on Adult Learning Institutions**



## APPENDIX – RESEARCH BACKGROUND AND METHODOLOGY

### Target Populations and Sampling

As in previous years, the target respondent groups for the satisfaction surveys included the following:

- The general public, including both:
    - Adult learners (Albertans aged 17 or older who have participated in a credit or non-credit course in Alberta in the last 12 months prior to the survey)
    - Adult non-learners (Albertans aged 17 or older who have not participated in a credit or non-credit course in Alberta in the last 12 months prior to the survey)
- Parents of students in Early Childhood Services (ECS) to Grade 12
- Senior high school students
- Parents of students with severe special needs
- In 2003/04 teachers were also added as an additional respondent group in order to obtain additional information about their perceptions of the learning system.

The samples for each target group (with the exception of the public survey) were provided to the survey company by Alberta Learning. For the student, teacher and the two parent surveys, names were generated randomly by Alberta Learning and all contact information was provided in secure files. For those cases in which contact information was incomplete, the survey company conducted a comprehensive search for listings.

For the public/adult learner/adult non-learner survey, a random listed sample for Alberta by census subdivision was used.

All samples were stratified by geographic location to ensure adequate representation of the population.

### Presentation of Results

For the purposes of this report, first-level data analysis includes presentation of descriptive statistics (frequencies) for survey items in text, tables and figures, as appropriate. The following should be noted with regard to the presentation of frequency data:

- Many items on the surveys use four-point response scales including "very satisfied, satisfied, dissatisfied, very dissatisfied" or "strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree," etc., depending on the question. Although not

asked, "don't know/not applicable" and "no response" (refusals) were recorded as well. Results presented in the reports may represent percentages for each of the individual options in a response scale *or* the combined percentages of respondents who reported "very good/good," "very satisfied/satisfied" or "strongly agree/agree." Thus, in the body of the reports, *overall* or *total* satisfaction or agreement refers to these combined percentages, whereas results pertaining to individual response-scale categories are specified separately in the text.

- For each survey, percentages are based on all responses for each item (i.e., "don't know/not applicable" and "no response" are included in the calculations). For all items, the "don't know/not applicable" and "no response" categories are combined into one category called "DK/NA/NR."

- All percentages are rounded to the nearest whole number based on computer-generated analysis. For single response items, percentages may not total to 100% due to rounding. Similarly, rounded percentages for individual response options may not total exactly to combined percentages due to rounding.

- In the case of multiple response items for which participants could provide more than one response, percentages are expressed in terms of the number of respondents, and, as a result, percentages total to more than 100% for these variables.

## Statistical Accuracy

The following table provides accuracy information about the surveys that were conducted for 2003/2004. The information includes the respondent groups surveyed, and the corresponding sample sizes and confidence intervals for each survey.

**Table 5**
**Confidence Intervals**

| Target Group | Number of Completions | 95% Confidence Interval |
|---|---|---|
| Public | 2003 | +/-2.2% |
| Adult Learner | 1000 | +/-3.1% |
| Adult Non-Learner | 2000 | +/-2.2% |
| Parents | 800 | +/-3.5% |
| High School Students | 800 | +/-3.5% |
| Parents of Students with Severe Special Needs | 801 | +/-3.5% |
| Teacher | 801 | +/-3.5% |